

Word order under *lade* ‘let’ and *høre* ‘hear’

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1. Introduction

The Nordic languages differ with respect to word order in infinitives under causative *lade* ‘let’ (and cognates), in cases where the agent of the embedded verb is unspecified (see e.g. Taraldsen 1984, Platzack 1986a, Thráinsson 2007:454 and Wood 2011). In Icelandic and Standard Swedish, an object DP must follow the embedded verb, while in Danish it must precede the verb; cf. (1) and (2). Faroese and Norwegian allow both orders (see Thráinsson et al. 2004:313 n. and Faarlund et al. 1997:1009). According to Hulthén (1944:127), VO is the normal order in Bokmål, and Faarlund et al. (1997:1009) states that the OV-order is used in literary style.

(1) a. Hun matte lade tæppet støvsuge. (Da.)

she must.PAST let rug.DEF vacuum-clean

b. * Hun matte lade støvsuge tæppet.

she must.PAST let vacuum-clean rug.DEF

‘She had to let vacuum-clean the rug.’

(cf. Hulthén 1944:125)

(2) a. * Hon måste låta mattan dammsuga. (Swe.)

she must.PRES let rug.DEF vacuum-clean

b. Hon måste låta dammsuga mattan.

she must.PRES let vacuum-clean rug.DEF

‘She had to let vacuum-clean the rug.’

(cf. Hulthén 1944:125)

If we assume that examples like (1a) involve raising to an object position, a pronominal object should undergo object shift in Danish (see Holmberg 1986:222 ff.). In Danish, weak pronouns obligatorily occur in a position before a sentence adverb, in the absence of an auxiliary (see [Bentzen 2014](#) for data and discussion of object shift).

The Danish part of the ScanDiaSyn survey included sentences to investigate the placement of DP objects in *lade*-causatives and weak pronouns embedded under *lade* and *høre* ‘hear’. The results from the Nordic Syntax Database (Lindstad et al 2009) and the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al. 2009) are presented below.

2. Results

2.1 Nordic Syntax Database

The Danish survey included the following sentences to test the placement of a full DP object in a *lade*-infinitive when the agent of the infinitival verb is implicit:

(3) a. Bo lod reparere bilen. (#1303) (Da.)

Bo let repair car.DEF

b. Bo lod bilen reparere. (#1304)

Bo let car.DEF repair

‘Bo let repair the car.’

The results show that the pattern illustrated in (1) above is robust in Denmark. Sentence (#1303), with the object following the infinitive, is rejected in all locations where it was tested. Sentence (#1304), with the object preceding the infinitive, is on the other hand accepted by all informants.

The survey also included several sentences to investigate the placement of pronouns relative a sentence adverbial. The following sentences tests the placement of a pronominal object in a *lade*-causative, when the agent of the infinitival verb is implicit:

(4) a. Bo lod jo reparere den. (#1053) (Da.)

Bo let well repair it

b. Bo lod jo den reparere. (#1054)

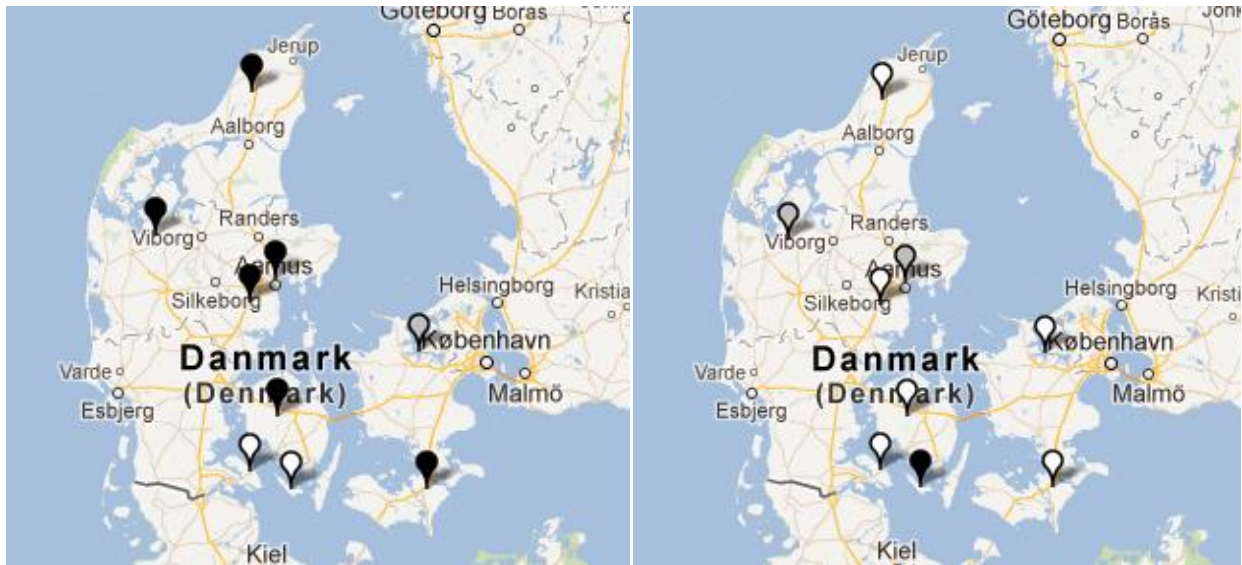
Bo let well it repair

c. Bo lod den jo reparere. (#1055)

Bo let it well repair

‘Well, Bo let repair it.’

Like the corresponding sentence with a full DP, sentence (#1053) is rejected throughout Denmark. With regard to sentence (#1054) and (#1055), there is some variation. Sentence (#1054) is rejected in many parts of Denmark, but it receives a high score in a couple of southern locations (Als & Ærø), and on Bornholm; see Map 1. Sentence (#1055), with object shift across the sentence adverb, is accepted in most locations; see Map 2. This sentence is rejected on Ærø and gets an intermediate score in Århus and on Western Jutland.



Map 1: Adverb-object-verb order under lade 'let' (#1054: *Bo lod jo den reparere.* 'Well, Bo let repair it.') in Danish. Map 2: Object-adverb-verb order under lade 'let' (#1055: *Bo lod den jo reparere.* 'Well, Bo let repair it.') in Danish.

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

In addition, the Danish questionnaire included the following *lade*-causatives where the agent of the embedded verb is expressed:

- (5) a. *Bo lod jo hende reparere bilen.* (#1051) (Da.)
Bo let well her repair car.DEF
- b. *Bo lod hende jo reparere bilen.* (#1052)
Bo let her well repair car.DEF
 'Well, Bo let her repair the car.'

Like sentence (#1054), sentence (#1051), with the embedded subject following the sentence adverb, is accepted on Als and Ærø in the south; see Map 3. It is, in addition, accepted on Zealand, and receives a medium score on Bornholm, in Århus and on Eastern Jutland. Sentence (#1052), with the embedded subject preceding the sentence adverb, largely patterns with the sentence with object shift (#1055) above; see Map 4. It is accepted in most locations, but not on Ærø. Unlike (#1055), sentence (#1052) is rejected also in Århus, and it receives a medium score on Eastern Jutland.



Map 3: Adverb-subject-verb order under *lade* ‘let’ (#1051: *Bo lod jo hende reparere bilen.* ‘Well, Bo let her repair the car.’) in Danish.

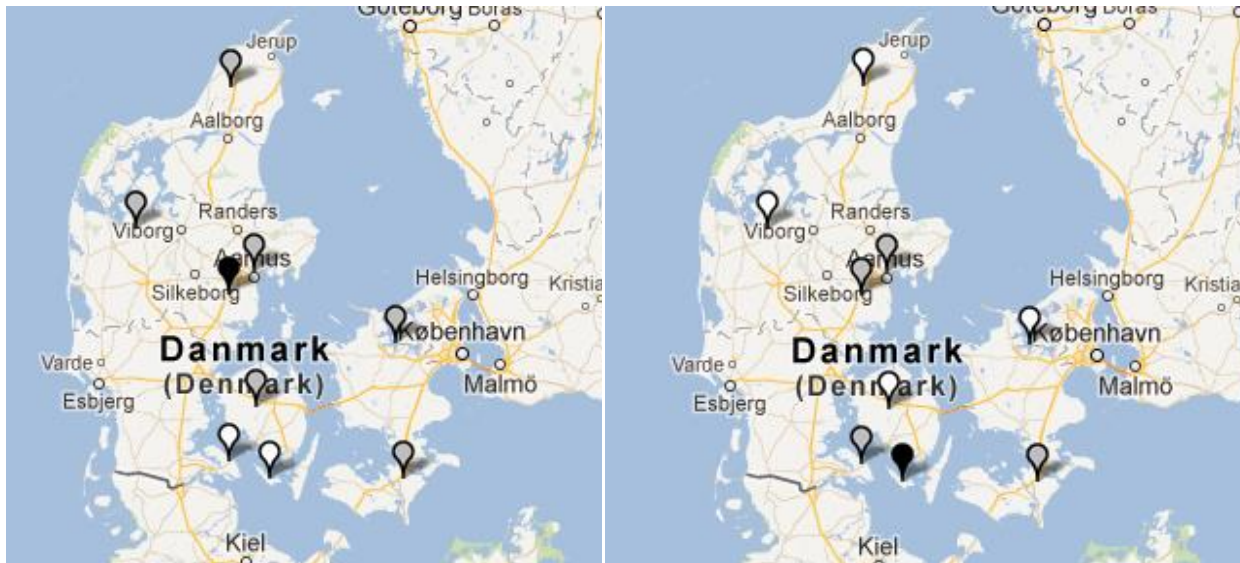
Map 4: Subject-adverb-verb order under *lade* ‘let’ (#1052: *Bo lod hende jo reparere bilen.* ‘Well, Bo let her repair the car.’) in Danish.

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

Two sentences with *høre* + an infinitive of an unergative verb were included in the survey:

- (6) a. Bo hørte jo hende snorke. (#1056) (Da.)
Bo heard well her snore
- b. Bo hørte hende jo snorke. (#1057)
Bo heard her well snore
 ‘Well, Bo heard her snore.’

Sentence (#1056), with the order adverb-subject, largely patterns with the corresponding *lade*-causative (sentence (#1051) above) and receives a high score on Ærø and Als; see Map 5. Although this sentence does not receive a high score on Zealand, it overall gets a higher score than the *lade*-causative. The only location where it is completely rejected by all informants is Eastern Jutland. Many speakers seem to prefer the order subject-adverb aslo in the construction with *høre*; see Map 6. Sentence (#1057) is completely rejected on Ærø, and receives an intermediate score in two other locations in Southern Denmark (Als and Fyn) and on Eastern Jutland.



Map 5: Adverb-subject-verb order under høre ‘hear’ (#1056: *Bo hørte jo hende snorke. ‘Well, Bo heard her snore.’*) in Danish. Map 6: Subject-adverb-verb order under høre ‘hear’ (#1057: *Bo hørte hende jo snorke. ‘Well, Bo heard her snore.’*) in Danish.

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

2.2 Nordic Dialect Corpus

There are only few examples of *lade* ‘let’ (and cognates) in the Nordic Dialect Corpus, and the variation suggested by the ScanDiaSyn survey is therefore not captured in the corpus. Several of the examples involve imperatives with a first person pronominal object, as in (7). Here, the object precedes the sentence adverb (as might be expected from the results of the survey).

(7) Lad os nu lige se engang (Da.)

Let us now just see sometime

‘Now, let’s finally have a look.’ (Fyn5)

3. Discussion

3.1 Age and gender variation in NSD

As noted above the sentence with *høre* ‘hear’ and the order adverb-subject (#1056) received an average medium score in several locations. This depends on inter-speaker variation that is not only geographically determined: some speakers judge the sentence as fully grammatical, other speakers reject it, but few speakers give it a medium score. For this sentence, it cannot be directly determined whether the variation relates to age or not; the survey did not include younger informants. There is no clear pattern relating to gender, either: in some locations, women tend to accept the sentence to a higher extent than men, but in other locations it is the other way around.

3.2 Theoretical issues relating to *lade*-causatives

Platzack (1986a) argues that the difference between Danish and Swedish with regard to word order in *lade*-causatives relates to other differences in the structure of infinitival clauses, and, specifically, to the different

positions of the infinitival marker in the languages. With respect *lade*-causatives, he suggests that the object of the infinitive in Danish is moved to the subject position of the infinitival clause, when the agent is implicit (1986a:131). The Danish *lade*-infinitive would then resemble a passive, but without passive morphology. In fact, the agent can be expressed by a *by*-phrase, just like in a passive, but without passive morphology; see (8). Faarlund et al. (1997:100) makes the same observation for Norwegian. Swedish examples corresponding to (8) are ungrammatical, unless the infinitival verb is passivized and the object is in a position before the infinitive; see (9).

- (8) Han lod hende male af en kendt kunstner. (Da.)
he let her paint.INF.ACT by a famous artist
 'He let her be painted by a famous artist.' (Platzack 1986a:131)

- (9) a. * Han lät måla/målas henne av en känd konstnär. (Swe.)
he let paint.INF.ACT/paint.INF.PASS her by a famous artist
- b. Han lät henne *måla/målas av en känd konstnär. (Swe.)
he let her paint.INF.ACT/paint.INF.PASS by a famous artist
 'He let her be painted by a famous artist.'

Platzack notes the same difference between Danish and Swedish in *høre*-infinitives; cf. (10a) and (10b).

- (10) a. Jag har hørt ham nævne. (Da.)
I have heard him mention.INF.ACT
- b. Jag har hört honom *nämna/nämnas (Swe.)
I have heard him mention.INF.ACT/mention.INF.PASS
 'I have heard him mentioned.' (Platzack 1986a:130)

However, in Swedish, *höra* (unlike *låta*) does not allow the subject of an active infinitive to remain implicit, even with the object following the verb; see (11).

- (11) * Jag har hört nämna/nämnas honom. (Swe.)
it can let mention.INF.ACT/mention.INF.PASS him
 'I have heard him mentioned.'

Also in the other Nordic languages, *lade* (and cognates) does not fully behave like *høre* 'hear' and other ECM-verbs (verbs that take an object + infinitive). For one thing, *lade* cannot take an anaphoric pronoun as complement in examples like (12a); cf. Sw. *höra* 'hear' in (12b) (and see Thráinsson 1979:340,440 n., Wood 2011). Wood (2011) concludes that while ECM-verbs like *høre/höra* are full lexical verbs, whereas *lade* (or Ice. *láta*) is a functional verb.

- (12) a. * Bo lät reparera sin bil och jag lät också det. (Swe.)
Bo let repair REFL car and I let also it
- b. Bo hörde henne snarka och jag hörde också det. (Swe.)
Bo heard her snore and I heard it too
 ‘Bo heard her snore, and I heard it too.’

With respect to the placement of a pre-infinitival pronoun, *lade* and *høre* seem to behave much alike in most Danish dialects, and the pronoun largely patterns with ordinary object pronouns, whether it is an underlying subject or an underlying object of the infinitive. As we have seen, in these constructions a non-shifted pronoun is typically possible in Southern Denmark, on Als and Ærø. The possibility of a non-shifted pronoun is somewhat more widespread when the pronoun is the subject of the infinitive. In the ScanDiaSyn investigation of object shift, non-shifted object pronouns were rejected in Denmark, except on Ærø (see [Bentzen 2014](#)).

3.3 Historical Development

As noted above, Icelandic and Swedish differ from the other languages by only allowing the order infinitive-object in *lade*-causatives. This seems to be largely the pattern also in Old Swedish, although Old Swedish is generally assumed to be an OV-language. In fact, in the runic inscriptions, examples with *lata* ‘let’ account for many of the cases with VO-order; a transliterated example is given in (13).

- (13) sikniutr auk auþr litu raisa stain at ofaik faþur sin (Old Swe.)
Signjut and Ávid let.PAST.3.PL raise.INF stone after Ofeg father REFL
 ‘Signjut and Ávid let raise the stone after Ofeg, their father.’ (UL 945, 11th century)

In Old Nordic, subjects of infinitives embedded under *lata* and other ECM-verbs sometimes appear in a position after the infinitive (see Wessén 1965:343). Levander (1909:121f) claims this possibility still exists in Övdalian (or did so in the beginning of the 20th century). Levander gives the example *lat sjå Margit* lit. ‘let see Margit’, with the interpretation ‘let Margit see’.

According to Alving (1918), a post-infinitival subject is more common with *lata* than with other ECM-verbs in Old Swedish. It typically occurs with an infinitive of an intransitive or a passive verb, but occasionally also with a transitive verb (cf. Platzack 1986b and Delsing & Falk in prep.). The order infinitive-subject disappears around the 17th-18th century, and Platzack (1986b) suggests that it is tied to fact that Swedish loses the possibility of null non-referential subjects around that time (cf. Falk 1993). Many of the Old Swedish examples are grammatical in Modern Swedish if an expletive is inserted; cf. the Old Swedish example in (14a) with Modern Swedish in (14b). In Old Swedish, the subject of the infinitive could be omitted also with other ECM-verbs than *lata* (see further Delsing & Falk in prep.).

- (14) a. oc saa hon när sik standa en mörkan andha (Old Swe.)
and saw she near REFL stand a dark spirit
 ‘and near her she saw a dark spirit stand.’ (a. 1500; from Delsing & Falk)
- b. Hon såg *(det) stå en mörk ande nära sig. (Mod. Swe.)
she saw there stand a dark spirit near REFL

However, as noted by Platzack, there are also Old Swedish examples with post-verbal *definite* subjects, which would not be grammatical with an expletive in Modern Swedish. An example is given in (15).

- (15) lät koma flodhena (Old Swe.)
let come flood.DEF
 ‘let the flood come’ (Birgitta, 14th century; from Platzack 1986b:101)

Platzack accounts for examples like these by assuming that certain ECM-infinitives are more clause-like than others, and that there is more than one possible position for the infinitival verb. As pointed out by Delsing & Falk (in prep.), Old Swedish often had ECM-infinitives with clausal properties, and used ECM-infinitives where in Modern Swedish, a *that*-clause would be the only option.

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Web sites:

- Nordic Atlas of Language Structures (NALS) Journal: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nals>
- Nordic Dialect Corpus: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html>
- Nordic Syntax Database: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html>